1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
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incessantly. After a time a spirit might appear to him. Perhaps this would be on the first or second night, perhaps later. Sometimes it was in full daylight, and the man really saw the spirit like a true person; but more usually he saw him in his sleep. It might be a person that appeared, that is to say, an untrue person (spirit), or an animal, or the spirit of a rock or of the brush. Some men went to islands and rivers instead of to mountain-peaks. These might receive the otter, or the beaver, or the muskrat, or the water-monster (bax'aa") as their guardian spirit. Sometimes when a man was crying on a mountain-top in a thunderstorm, the thunder (bax'aa") appeared to him. The lightning shot straight towards him, as if to hit him, and the bird was so near above his head that the man sometimes became afraid and ran away. If he staid, the thunder-bird became his spirit, and gave him medicine that was unusually powerful. Generally, it seems, the man cried incessantly, until he was exhausted and fell asleep. Then the spirit appeared to him, saying, "I pity you. What do you want?" The man said that he wished to be wealthy, or successful in war or love, or to become a medicine-man. If he was to be a doctor, the spirit showed him roots and plants, telling him to note their appearance, and informing him of the diseases for which they were a cure. Those plants that he had seen in his dream or vision, the new doctor looked for until he found them. His spirit told him, "In so many years (naming the number) you will begin to doctor." After that time had elapsed, he began doctoring. The spirit or animal told him that the place where he was was its own home. From this time on, the man never killed the animal that had appeared to him (except, apparently, for the purpose of obtaining parts of it as a fetish or amulet); nor did he eat of it under any circumstances. He used a part of the animal, especially the claws or the fur, in his doctoring. If the spirit of a rock had appeared to him, he used a stone.

Medicine-men cured the sick by sucking the body and by brushing it. As is customary among Indians, they were believed to suck through the skin without biting, cutting, or puncturing it. They might suck blood, pebbles, cloth, human finger-nails, bunches of hair, and many other things. If they sucked out old pus, it was evidence that the disease was of long standing. If they brushed or rubbed the patient, they used owl-feathers, skunk-skin, prairie-dog fur, or similar parts of animals. Some used bells as rattles, some whistles, and some drums; and all sang, each doctor having his own songs. After sucking the patient, the doctor chewed up medicine, which he then applied to the patient's body. He often also gave him medicine boiled in water to drink. The powers of doctors varied. Different men were able to cure different diseases. It is said, however, that none could do much for affections of the ear.

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Doctors were paid a horse or more for their services. Sometimes several, in turn, doctored a patient, each one blaming those that had failed before. Often they laid the sickness to spirits, or to other doctors. This last occurred especially if in their sucking they extracted human finger-nails or similar objects. In such a case the doctor got his patient to sleep. The patient might then in his dream see the person that had made him sick, and on awaking would denounce him. If the sick man died, his relatives might kill the doctor whom he had named as the cause of his sickness.

There were not so many women doctors as men. They appear not to have gone out to the mountains with the intention of acquiring supernatural power, but to have received guardian spirits when they were away from the camp, mourning.

The jugular and femoral arteries and the aorta were called ts'niinotanoudj[1] ("having no ears"), because, when severed, they did not heed any remedies.

In order to save the life of a sick relative, the joint of the little finger was sometimes cut off in sacrifice to the sun.

There were some medicine-men who, having had their fingers tied, then had their knees fastened together and their hands secured behind their back. After this they were wrapped in a robe and the robe was wound about with a rope. Then such a medicine-man called his spirit. When it appeared, he was loosened instantaneously, and the robe and the rope were thrown at the man that tied him.

Fig. 30 (50 1937). Doctor's Charm. Length, 22 cm.

A charm used by a doctor is shown in Fig. 30. It consists of a deer-tail with beaded base, and of two black feathers and a bunch of down feathers. All parts of the object are reddened. This piece was used to brush patients. At other times during the doctoring it was worn on the medicine-man's clothing.[2]

A man unsuccessful in winning a woman's love sometimes fasted on a

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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lodge cover, the hostess provided food and there was no other direct remuneration. If one sought knowledge as to how to use an ordinary medicinal root, something was given in exchange, but in a relatively small amount. On the other hand in compensation for the services of a medicine man, not only was food prepared, but in addition a much greater amount of property was given to the doctor, who in turn would see that those who had accompanied him to help in singing at the cure, would receive some goods as well. The amount offered to the doctor by the one paying for the services was governed by the reputation of the medicine man as well as by the individual's regard for his own reputation for generosity. People would say: "Look how much so-and-so thinks of his relative who was sick—he gave so much to the one who cured him." If the patient were very ill a whole family might really impoverish itself in paying doctors, were it necessary to call in one specialist after another, as sometimes happened.

Although apparently there was a tendency to call on relatives to perform services—such as naming a child, telling a war story at the erection of a new lodge, and so on—remuneration was forthcoming, although perhaps on not so large a scale as if a non-relative were called on to perform the same offices.

In addition to exchange of goods effected through generous hospitality and the prestige-requirements of ostentatious liberality, including payment for services, the distribution of goods within the tribe was aided by gambling. Wagers were matched by two competing individuals and bet on an all-or-nothing basis. Considerable amounts of property changed hands at a single match.[19]

[19] For a discussion of gambling among the Gros Ventres, see Flannery and Cooper, 1946.

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stance, it was the dark of the moon when a woman ceased menstruation, she kept track of the months by marking with charcoal on a piece of wood, or by notching a stick, each successive time the moon was in that phase and "she would usually estimate it right." 843 805 211

Childbirth usually took place right in the woman's own lodge. Should someone there be sick, he would be moved to another lodge if possible, for while it was considered bad for the sick person to be in the same lodge with a woman in her menses, it was much worse were the woman in labor, for the odor of the blood at delivery would affect the sick person adversely. In fact, a person who had only been near the place where a woman was being delivered was not allowed to come near a person who was ill. If the patient could not be moved, the woman in labor would go to another lodge, preferably to that of her grandmother or of her widowed aunt. She would avoid her own mother's lodge as her father or brothers might be around and she would be "ashamed" to go where they might be. 844 [841]

Although the attitude has somewhat changed now, in former times, according to Coming Daylight and Singer, a pregnant woman was supposed to be reticent regarding her condition right up to the last moment. She might suffer intensely, but "you would never know there was a thing wrong with her." Only when she seemed to be very close to term did they send for a midwife and for some old man or woman who would give her medicine. A male doctor did not touch a woman in labor, but would give her medicine to alleviate the pains. Mary told of her own experience. "There was a well-known doctor of this kind who died about ten years ago. He was blind and, when called on a case, would sit with a pot of medicine beside him. He attended me and when he heard me say I was in pain he would just touch me with the end of the stick and the cramps would go away. Finally I complained that I was tired. The midwife said that it would soon be over, but the old doctor told them: 'No. It hasn't turned yet.' I thought this was strange that he should know this as not only was he blind but he had not touched me. Later on he said: 'It will be about a half hour more.' And he was right." 844 756

Different practitioners have different methods. Singer witnessed the following case. "A man had received power from

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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844 756 'someone' [a supernatural agent] to relieve women in labor. His wife was assisting a woman who was experiencing great difficulty. She went to her husband and said: 'What are you made of that you don't pity and help us?' He paid no attention at first but finally gave in to her pleas. He said: 'All right. I will pity you folks. You blow this powdered medicine root on the nape of that woman's neck. Then boil a bit of this other medicine and give it to her with this horn spoon. Make her drink from this very spoon.' The treatment was successful and the child was born very shortly thereafter."

[842] 844 Sometimes such doctors would predict the sex of the expected child, but a common saying was that a woman herself could tell because "a boy will lie in the womb with his knees up, whereas a girl will lie flat."

It was not necessary to have both a midwife and a doctor if the midwife herself knew medicines. For instance, Coming Daylight's grandmother had medicines for childbirth and always looked after women without calling in anyone else. After Coming Daylight had borne her first child, her grandmother taught her all these medicines so that she in turn could assist her female relatives. They had to pay each one who helped at childbirth. The doctor, or the midwife who administered medicines, would receive as much as a horse, while the others who assisted were paid by gifts of lengths of cloth, blankets, or other articles of that sort.

The woman assumed a kneeling position and grasped a crossbar. "They won't let you lie down unless you are so weak you can't help yourself."[4] If a woman were slow in childbirth, the midwife tried to manipulate the foetus in the right place in order to speed the delivery. She massaged the woman gently and talked to her, telling her: "Take it easy. Don't think that you are going to have a hard time. Think of pleasant things. Make it easier for yourself."

Most women were very quiet even when the pains were bad. They always said that if a woman cries out she drives the child back. Furthermore, they said that it is bad if a woman turns and twists in pain as the cord will get all tangled up around the child.

Anyone assisting at the birth could cut the umbilical cord.

[4] Cf. Kroeber, 1908, p. 181.

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
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was full of 'nicotine,' and showed me how to draw out sickness through the stem. But I told him: 'I don't care to have any power, because people who accept power have only a certain length of time to live and it is always too soon [short].' "

Those who possessed gambling power in particular always became afflicted with some serious ailment of their legs and/or arms. There would be pain in and swelling of the joints, and the possessors would die before their time. This happened to Lone Bear, The Boy's wife's father, who had gambling power; while still in his prime his legs went bad, and even though he quit gambling to escape the penalty, he died prematurely. Red Whip, too, one of the greatest of those with gambling power, who died in 1912, died, the Gros Ventres believed, before his time.

It was believed that Bull Lodge, a great medicine man, did not live his life out.

A person, however, who had acquired power and later transferred all of it by gift or sale to another person or persons could thereby escape the penalty and live his life out. In this case the penalty would be transferred, along with the power, to the transferee or transferees.

Doctoring power was sometimes avoided or refused for other reasons than fear of or unwillingness to accept the penalty of illness or shortened life. Doctors, somewhat like keepers of the sacred Pipes, had to live restricted lives, abstain from certain foods, and avoid certain actions. Personal liberty was thus curtailed. Coming Daylight, when a young girl, was offered medicine power by a man four successive times in dreams, but she refused: "I did not want to be a medicine woman. I did not like it because medicine people suck on the affected part of the patient and have to swallow what they extract,—even though that man was showing me that I would have to extract with my hands, and not by sucking." Bad Bad Bull had power to cure the powerful "stomach-eating sickness" [cancer?] and used to suck out the small animal that caused it. In his old age he wanted to give this power to his sister, but she would say: "Oh, I am bashful. I would not be able to doctor that sickness. I would like to have the power so I could cure the pains but I would not like the part [or the curing pro-

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cedure] where you pull [suck] it [the animal] out." When she would say that people would tell her: "You should have taken the power and so gotten a lot of things [in payment] for curing that disease."

Some women would refrain from asking power, particularly love power, from men who had it, because payment included allowing sex relations with the man.

While, then, the possession of powers brought the possessor some very worthwhile advantages, advantages differing in kind according to the specific power acquired, it had its drawbacks—chiefly illness and shortened life, but also restrictions on freedom and other obligations distasteful to at least some individuals. The advice, therefore, given by parents and councilors to avoid seeking power is understandable. So, too, is the fact that many neither sought power nor accepted it when it was offered by supernatural beings or by fellow-tribesman. Many thus clung more to what appears to The Boy and others to have been the ideal Gros Ventre philosophy of life: For the fulfillment of your wishes rely on yourself and on prayer, rather than on magical power.

We recorded a number of cases of refusal of power, some of them already cited above in passing. In no case of refusal except one did the person refusing suffer any evil consequences therefor, and two of our informants, Coming Daylight and Singer explicitly stated that such refusal curtailed no penalty. A person was quite free to accept or decline an offer of power whether made by a power-giving being or a power-possessing fellow-tribesman. Neither of the latter would take offense if the offer were declined.

Coming Daylight in various free chats volunteered many details of her own personal refusals of power. Her earliest experience came when she was a very young girl, only about eight years old, and was living with her grandmother. "I used to sleep in a big lodge [with her grandmother]. While I was sleeping, a man came and wakened me. He had a bag of medicine on his back and told me, 'You can be a medicine woman.' The third time he appeared to me [in dreams], there was a person lying there, just skin and bones. The man [with the medicines] said to me, 'You could cure such persons as this one. You can take all these medicines,'

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and he spread out, all the medicines and told her what each was for and said, 'Do everything I tell you to do. Lay your hands on the sick and you will have it [medicine? cause of illness?] on your hands.' But I never wanted to take this and I would tell the man so. In the morning I would tell my dream to my grandmother, although I was not supposed to do so until after the fourth dream, and my grandmother would say to me: 'Do not say anything. You will be a great medicine woman.' But I did not want this power. I kept refusing it and for this reason after the man had appeared to me in dreams the fourth time he quit coming. I would have been great if I had accepted the power but I did not want it.—Maybe if this dream had come to me later I might have accepted the power and then I would have been like Good Singer [Coming Daylight's father's sister, a famous medicine woman of Coming Daylight's earlier years]."

On later occasions, too, she was offered power in dreams, but she always refused and does not regret having so refused. "But," she said, "all I wanted was to live a peaceful life and get food easily. I have always been well fixed with things to eat and have gotten things easily, because I prayed for these things instead of taking medicine power . . . besides I had too many children to be a medicine woman. . . . My children were all Catholics. I too joined the Church, and I will be a good Catholic until I die."

Coming Daylight was also offered in a dream the power to "know children," that is, power to doctor women who did not want children and likewise refused it.[8]

On other occasions, an old medicine man, who had cured her infant daughter would offer to transfer curing power to her, at the implicitly understood common price of granting sex relations with him. "If you want that power," he would say, "you can come crying to me." But she used to answer: "Oh, I wouldn't do that because you are one of those who like to have women and you would try to have me."

One instance of refusal of power by Singer was noted previously. Another was described by her as follows. "Once when we had gone to Rocky Boy Reservation, I went quite a distance to fetch

[8] Cf. Flannery, 1953, p. 129.

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wood. Something in my sleeve kept biting me. I would sort of work my sleeve but it kept biting me. Finally I took off my dress and found it was a big spider with long legs. I did not kill it but just brushed it off. That night in a dream the spider told me: 'Because you had pity on me, I will have pity on you.' But I told the spider: 'I do not care for any powers from a bug or spider.' Afterwards people told me I should have accepted the offered power so that I could doctor spider bites. If you accept a power like that you are shown in your dream how to doctor. Nothing happens if you refuse such power." Every once in a while people were bitten by spiders. Cora Chandler had heard of one such case: "One fourth of July at Lodge Pole a woman got bitten while fixing her tent and died the same evening. Had Singer accepted the power offered her, she could have doctored that woman."

Little Man, Al Chandler's adoptive father, once refused power from a rattlesnake to cure snake bites, but acquired power to cure seven dying persons. He had cured people and wanted to pass on what remained of his power to Al. But the latter in recounting the matter stated: "I did not want this power on account of the Catholic Church. I was afraid I might poison somebody. But the old man [Little Man] said: 'You will know all about it and what to do. All you have to do is to accept it. The rest will come to you. I am getting old and you might need it for your children. You could doctor your own children.' But the Catholics did not want you to do such things." So Al declined the old man's offer.

By three different men, who possessed love power, The Boy was offered this power, but in all cases he refused. His accounts follow.

"One old man lived near Bear Paws and when he came to my place, then on the Milk River, I used to accommodate him, although he would eat with my father, Lame Bull. He appreciated this and wanted to do something to repay the favor. So he said to me: 'I am going to give you my woman's medicine in payment for consideration of your service to me. I haven't anything of adequate value to pay you back.' He had a looking glass he used to do his stuff with. But I diplomatically refused. I told him: 'I do not like that kind of thing and never have, although I appreciate the fact

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757 824 Some evil such as sickness or death would befall an unauthorized gatherer. When the right to gather a particular medicinal plant was transferred, the transferrer would take the transferee out and show him or her the growing plant and tell the name.

When a medicinal root was dug, some offering, such as a bit of tobacco or a necklace of beads, was put in the ground in its place, or in the case of gathering "white medicine" [fungus?], was placed alongside the tree. In making this offering a short prayer was said. The content and wording of the prayer differed from individual to individual. According to The Boy the gatherer would take the bit of tobacco and pray with it, saying, "I am going to use your medicine." "Your" would have reference to the Gros Ventre concept that the medicines while gotten immediately from a bear or rock or other inferior creature came ultimately from the Supreme Being. His name would be mentioned first in the prayer and so acknowledged as the one to whom all things, even these roots, ultimately belonged. The Last Child would be mentioned last and would get some share in the tobacco offered.

According to Singer, "When we take a [medicinal] root, we say: 'I give you this. I am putting something in your place. I didn't take you for nothing!' We talk like we are talking to a person. Most Indians have the same way." Coming Daylight who was present explained: "We are talking to Our Lord and we never leave out the Sun," and apparently the Last Child was included. She further explained on another occasion: "When they dig the [medicinal] root, they have something to put in place of it and they say: 'I am taking this. Have pity on us. Whatever way I may use this [root], may I be successful in my work.' Then they cover over the hole made by extracting the root. It is kind of buying it like." "Then when you have some of this medicine and pass it on, the receiver gives you something for it."

Doctoring Power

● 756 What kinds of power did professional medicine men and women possess? In attempting to answer it, we wish to emphasize that while certain individuals (such as Stiffarm) who effected cures, were definitely recognized as professional doctors with super-

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natural power, and certain others (such as Coming Daylight) at the other end of the range as non-professional, the one type graded imperceptibly into the other, no sharp dividing lines existed, and many individuals who effected cure could on equally good grounds be classed with either the professionals or the non-professionals. We could discover no recognized criteria by which the two classes could be clearly and in all cases be distinguished.

A professional doctor was called nāta:nhehi, and this word was used only for professional doctors, or be:tānhehi, used for a "very powerful" medicine man or one with a painted lodge. This last term was a generic one for "holy" or "sacred persons," including Pipe keepers, persons with ghost helpers, medicine men, and "everyone who had any kind of supernatural power."

Professional medicine men and women were not organized into any kind of society or guild. Each operated singly and on his or her own.

Some medicine men and women, such as Black Raven (a cousin of Coming Daylight) and his wife, were general practitioners for "any kind of sickness like common colds," without any specialty. But most doctors, however, were specialists, with power to cure only certain diseases or in certain circumstances. There were many different kinds of doctors, each a specialist in only certain specific fields. One, for instance, could cure facial paralysis; another, rattlesnake bites; another, venereal disease. Some got special power to foretell the sex of unborn children or to prevent or promote conception. Thus Bear Nose had gotten to be such a doctor and also to have many horses by sleeping out on the mountains. He was told that he himself would have no offspring. One young man got power to help women who were going to give birth, but was told at the same time that he would never have any children of his own. Coming Daylight herself was offered in a dream the power to "know children," that is, to give medicine to women to prevent conception, but she refused the power. Some had power to help prevent or promote conception at will.[12] Another doctor had

[12] For further details on powers connected with childbirth and contraception, see Flannery, 1953, pp. 128-29.

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●756 power to cure "some kind of gland trouble;" others, to treat "a bursting blood vessel."

A professional doctor was under certain limitations, restrictions and taboos, and liabilities.

756 787 The being or beings who gave doctoring power would at the same time warn the recipient not to begin practice at once. "If," The Boy stated, "a person accepted the offer of medicine power, he would be told not to begin doctoring for so many years, but to keep his power a secret for the time being. . . . It would be known that a given man was sleeping around on high buttes. After a number of years he would declare his time was up, would keep his secret no more, and would start to practice. But even then very powerful doctors would usually not reveal who gave them their power." Coming Daylight, it is true, thought the recipient could start practicing at once, but Singer and Al Chandler were quite positive that deferment was required. According to Singer, "the one who gave the power for medicine would tell the receiver when he or she could start curing. It would usually be after at least four years." According to Al Chandler, "they [power-giving beings] give them [recipients] so many years to pass before they can do medicine work."

Lame Bull lost his doctoring power as a result of doctoring before his years of "probation" were up. The wife of the brother of his "best wife" was ill, and this wife threatened to leave Lame Bull unless he doctored that woman. Under such duress, Lame Bull agreed to doctor her, and he cured her. After he did so he was told in a dream that he had lost out and would not be a doctor because he had doctored before his time of probation or deferment was over. A night or two after, a spider came out of his ear and a thunder-rock out of his mouth. Lame Bull was not keeper of the Flat Pipe at this time.

In some instances, at least according to Coming Daylight, "when a man got some doctoring power he would tell his wife. . . . She would be the one to call her husband's power to the attention of others."

756 Supernatural power to cure very grave illness was often bestowed under limitations as to number of cases. Thus White

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Weasel was given power to cure only a limited number of cases; Goes Back, a medicine woman, was granted power to cure only one case and she used it to cure Coming Daylight's husband, Little Man; Al Chandler's adoptive father, also called Little Man, got power [from a coyote] to cure seven persons at the point of death, but used it in only three cases. There were no limitations ordinarily, it appears, on power to cure minor ailments; a professional doctor, Cora Chandler stated, "could do other little doctoring as often as called."

Doctors, as The Boy expressed it, "had to live restricted lives, to avoid doing certain things or eating certain foods, somewhat like keepers of sacred Pipes." According to Al Chandler, one was forbidden to eat buffalo heart under penalty of death, and "certain medicine men people tell about were vulnerable only in one certain spot,"—in one case the man's big toe, in another, a spot on his shoulder. This latter doctor always wore a little circle of willow wrapped with weasel skin over this spot; he was wounded badly but, until that spot on his shoulder was hit, was not killed. The donor of power might warn the recipient never to let anyone do some specific thing to him. Thus Little Man, Al Chandler's adoptive father, when he got power was warned by the supernatural donor: "Never let anyone pull your hair. Here however, is the remedy. If there is anyone present when your hair is pulled tell him to make a smudge of sweet pine, then put it near your nose, and if you can sniff it you will come through safe, otherwise you are a goner." Actually Little Man's death, as Al Chandler told it in detail, occurred shortly after a quarrel with his wife in the course of which she pulled his hair. Little Man quit fighting and sat quiet. Two or three days later he was down sick. White and Indian doctors were called in but none could do anything for him. Al Chandler went to stay with him but he did not want Al there. He wanted to die and did not want Al to talk him out of it. In a little while he was dead.

Doctors, or at least some of them, got power not only to cure but also to cause sickness and to kill, poison or otherwise harm people. Some other doctors were believed to have used such lethal power, although such use was definitely looked upon as a crime

789 voyance and prophecy, and particularly of wonder working, such as making sugar from sand, matches from grass, and so forth. Some feats of legerdemain, integral and non-integral to curing procedures, have been described in detail. While skill at legerdemain was possessed, as we have seen, by individuals with ancestral helpers, by at least one famous gambler, and probably by other non-medical men, it was especially common among professional doctors. It was, in most cases and by most of the laity believed to be a supernatural gift and, of course, served to give corroborative evidence to the laity of the genuineness of the curing powers of the practitioner, to enhance his (or her) prestige, and to keep and extend his clientele.

Exercise of Powers

756 Each doctor in curing practice used his or her own distinctive rites. Certain rites and observances however were commonly followed by many or all doctors. These more common rites and observances will be described first, after that, some examples of distinctive ones.

The ordinary procedure to engage the services of a doctor for a given case was to go to him (or her) and offer him a pipe filled with tobacco or tobacco mixture. Acceptance and smoking of the pipe by the doctor,—and in accord with the general Gros Ventre pattern, the request with offer of a pipe could hardly be refused,—meant that he agreed to take the case. Sometimes just tobacco was sent or brought to him. In certain instances, too, where petitioner and doctor were related the pipe offering could be dispensed with. Thus in view of their relationship, Al Chandler related that he asked his adoptive father, Little Man, on a given occasion to accept a case without the pipe offering. "I did not have to have a pipe. My father would do anything for me, pipe or no pipe."

"It was important," The Boy explained, "how you handed the pipe to the doctor before calling him. Before approaching him, you would ask around: 'How do you hand the pipe to so-and-so?' A number of doctors might have the same way, but not all had. If no one knew [for a given doctor], then you would ask the doctor

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himself and he would say: 'Hand me the pipe stem first,' or 'bowl first,' or 'sideways,' or 'lay it on the ground.' Some doctors did not require a pipe, but only tobacco, when they were asked to treat a case."

Lame Bull did not require a pipe, but he had to be called four times. Each time the petitioner would start from the patient's lodge, go to Lame Bull's lodge, open the flap of the door, and, without going inside, say to him: "I am calling you to doctor." This was a procedure peculiar to Lame Bull, who at the time was not a Pipe keeper.

The doctor commonly had a helper or helpers to assist at or in the doctoring,—his wife often, or certain men and women specified by the doctor. Not infrequently these latter were relatives of his.

The rite itself was "sort of private." Only the doctor, the appointed helpers, the patient and the patient's immediate family were allowed to be present. "People would not be allowed just to drop in" during the curing rite. Two guards were (or might be) stationed outside the lodge to keep people away. Intrusion by anyone during a curing rite might render the rite futile, and lead to grave consequences as illustrated in the following cases reported by The Boy.

"A young man was about to be doctored. Just as the rite started a man came to the lodge and said to the two guards outside: 'I have the right to go inside. I want to see this great doctor.' They let him enter. As he did so, blood rushed out of the doctor's mouth, and the doctor said: 'Carry me back to my lodge as quick as possible.' When he got there he said: 'Fill up a pipe quickly and give it to me.' He then took a few puffs, fumigated his hand and 'rubbed' himself with the smoke, and got all right. The intruder had purposely come in to spoil the doctor's medicine, for he suspected that the young man patient was in love with his wife and he wanted him to die. And the young man did die."

In another case while a doctor was treating a patient, a band chief who was drinking heavily at the time and who had recently killed a relative of the doctor came into the lodge without leave and asked the master of the lodge for whiskey. The doctor packed

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756 up his medicines at once, went home, got his rifle, came back and shot the band chief dead on the spot.[18]

755 Sometimes the doctor, just before actually beginning treatment of his patient, would test out, or make a show of testing out, his power to know beforehand whether his treatment would be successful. One doctor, Sits Holy, for instance, just about to treat a wounded man in whose spine an arrowhead was lodged, said: "I'll test my power first to see if I can extract the arrowhead." The season was late fall. The doctor sang and made incense, and then a young bear stuck its paws out of the doctor's mouth and growled loud enough to be heard over the camp. Then the doctor "got" [made appear] ripe service-berries and choke-berries. Then he took a bear claw, dug in the ground right where he was sitting, and pulled out a fresh wild turnip. Then he said, "I'll be successful." And so he was; he extracted the arrowhead. In another case, a doctor, when just about to start treatment, picked up a piece of wood carved in the shape of an arrowhead, and turned it into an iron arrowhead, and so went forward confidently to begin treatment.

Commonly, perhaps always, the doctor's first ritual act in actual curing was praying with and smoking a pipe. The doctor would hold up the pipe and pray, first, as usual, to the Supreme Being, and then to his or her particular power-bestower,—animal, rock, or whatever it was.

While curing rites were apt to be rather noisy, tense and thrilling experiences for all present, the doctor did not go into trance or lose consciousness during them.

The more common elements in the curing ritual and procedure were singing, drumming, rattling, incensing, and searching out the cause of the ailment. "The people," said Coming Daylight, "who are in there [the lodge where rite was performed] always have to sing when the medicine man doctors." The doctor would ordinarily, it seems, start the singing and drumming, and then the others present would join in or take over entirely while the doctor carried through his or her treatment.

According to The Boy, "when a medicine man started off he

[18] Cf. Flannery, 1953, pp. 49-51.

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755 [764] there and saw two fresh graves. They dig a hole about three or four feet deep and put sticks across, cover that with canvas and cover the canvas with dirt. I laid down on one of the graves and that is where they found me. When I did not come back my father started looking for me. I was just like dead and they got an old medicine man to work on me, for at that time my adopted father, Little Man, had not yet gotten doctoring power.

"When I woke up, my father, my stepfather (the man married to my real mother), a woman and the old doctor, Black Bird, were there in this big lodge. I did not know what had happened to me but when I woke up I saw old Black Bird sitting by me. He had a china saucer with medicine in it and with four little brass bells [sic] in the medicine. He told me to drink up the medicine. I took the medicine but tried to balk at the bells. But the old man said: 'No, no drink the bells and all. The bells will be your protection. You will never get sick and ghosts will no longer be able to harm you. You could go to sleep with them and sit up with them [without harm to you from them]."

In a long narrative of a battle between the Gros Ventres and the Crow, The Boy described, very briefly, the manner in which one of the Gros Ventres was cured. After the fighting was over this man was found unconscious, bleeding from a wound in the arm. One of the Gros Ventres knew how to staunch the flow of blood He had an otter-skin with medicine tied on the nose thereof. With this he treated the wounded man's arm. The flow of blood stopped at once and the man regained consciousness. A travois was made and they had the man's relatives haul him back to the main camp on it.

●756 A number of other individuals with doctoring power were mentioned by name at various times by our informants—Sleeping Bear, He Steals, Bill Jones, Ragged Robe (d. about 1935), Otter Robe, Joe Assiniboine—but we obtained no information on their curing procedures. We knew Joe Assiniboine, who alone of the [795] surviving Gros Ventres refused to the last to become a Catholic and who died only recently in 1942 or 1943, but unfortunately, though not patently unfriendly to us, was consistently reluctant to give information.

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In the preceding pages we have been concerned with the ritual procedures used in the exercise of curing power, of "good" doctoring power. We now turn to procedures used for working "bad" power, for doing harm to people putting spells on them, "shooting" them, in a word, for practicing witchcraft. Our information on such procedures is much less detailed than we would desire, for those who resorted to the use of such "bad" power did so secretly as a rule and were very reticent about their procedures. Furthermore, so far as we could judge, "bad" power was less frequently used than "good" power.

Bad medicine could be put on the victim by sheer wishing. Singer referred to one very powerful medicine man as "being able to just wish somebody dead." The victim would be "poisoned" at a distance by the medicine man. As Al Chandler explained the matter:

"There were some bad medicine men who had medicine that could poison you without their touching you or associating with you, no matter how far away they might be from you, even two miles. They wanted to do something to you or to somebody you loved. Then you or your loved one got sick all of a sudden. That was considered a crime. This medicine man may have had it in for you for some reason, jealousy or something like that, and he would poison you. He would just sit in his lodge and perform there and say whom he was doing this to, and this person would get sick or something would happen to him. . . . Some medicine man could poison you without touching you."

The bad medicine man would commonly operate by "shooting" the victim, that is, by projecting some object into the victim's body. Singer was once so "shot" with a finger nail, Coming Daylight's husband, Little Man, with a bit of rag (supra, p. 341). "One man's medicine," according to Thomas Main, "was a sand burr. He could wish it to go a long way off and lodge in a man's throat, and the man would die after a while."

Failures and Skepticism

Failures by doctors to cure were apparently quite common. We were told incidentally of a number of cases. We obtained no in-

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756 formation, however, on the causes to which doctors attributed failure to cure.

Some doctors were believed by some at least of the people to resort to deliberate deceit and trickery. Al Chandler remarked that "so many times doctors fake and try to get everything a person owns." An implication to this effect is also contained in his account of the acquisition of doctoring power by his adoptive father, Little Man, and in his direct statement regarding him: "Little Man was honest. He never faked and everybody like him. If he couldn't cure, he wouldn't want anything. He would wait before he took what a person paid because he wanted to see if the patient was really well." Faking by medicine men to get something from a person, he stated, was looked upon as a crime.

Coming Daylight gave a detailed account of her catching one medicine-man, in the act of deception.

755 756 "At one time a Gros Ventre man named Strong Man was married to a Piegan woman. She was suffering with something in her stomach. It is something that moves in the stomach and causes great suffering. The English name for it, I think, is cancer, but it might be something else. So Strong Man sent someone to call a particular medicine man who, instead of coming right away, said: 'Wait until tomorrow. In the meantime make a lodge and make it well and clean with nothing dirty in it, and have everything ready you intend to give me.'

"I could see this medicine man's house from where I lived. My corral was some distance away around a bend. During the day I saw this man and his wife walking together straight ahead without looking back. When I saw them do so the third time I began to think they were up to something. So I waited and watched, and when they went the fourth time and had gotten as far as my corral, I ran over to their house.

"Sure enough by their bed was a bowl, covered. I ran over and uncovered it. The bag from the end of the guts was in water in this bowl and I said to myself: 'Sure enough. That is just what I thought. He is up to something. He is preparing this 'cancer' or whatever it is that he is going to pull out of that sick woman.' So I ran back quickly to my own house, and when that man and

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his wife returned home they did not know I had been at their house. T55

"My husband, Little Man, was out hunting horses. When he came back I told him: 'This crazy thing has already prepared what he is going to pull out.' I told him of my visit to the house and of that thing that was in the bowl. That medicine man had told me and my husband to come with him and his wife when he would go to doctor the woman, so we could get something [as payment]. So I told my husband: 'You are going to see that the thing he pulls out is the same thing that is in the bowl.' T56

"So the next day we all went over the hills to Strong Man's place. The others all went into the nice lodge that had been prepared for the doctoring. But I did not go, I just stayed in Strong Man's house, but I could hear them singing. The people who are in there always had to sing when the medicine man is doctoring.

"Little Man sat by the door of the lodge. The man did his medicine work. He always had a white handkerchief and a black one. This time he used the black one. He would kind of do things under that black handkerchief. Of course he did it so quickly that you could hardly see what he was doing. Sure enough, however, he had that thing I had told my husband about and he pretended that he had taken it out of the woman.

"He showed it first to all the men, and one of them said: 'Oh, that is the way this animal looks that eats on a person!' So Little Man looked at it and it was the very same thing I had seen in the bowl. Little Man clasped his hands in the gesture that indicated you think to yourself something is awful or powerful. Then all the women had to look at it and they especially make all kinds of exclamations about that thing. Then they handed it back to the doctor and he cut it up and ate it, and he drank all the water it was soaked in. Little Man was thinking to himself: 'Of all the dirty things he eats!' "

Attention may be called to Little Man's gesture of admiration or awe made in spite of his inner conviction of trickery. This behavior contrasts with Coming Daylight's open flaunting, on another occasion, of her disbelief in the same medicine man. It may be recalled, too (supra, p. 347), that while Little Man used to make fun of Stiffarm for wearing a special bracelet, he was careful not T56

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756 to do so in Stiffarm's presence. Making fun to their face of powerful medicine men or so expressing skepticism of their power was evidently not considered prudent.

Skepticism, or at least profession of skepticism, regarding the powers of medicine men or regarding some powers of some medicine man, was not confined to Coming Daylight and her husband, their own skepticism centered mostly on one doctor. We recorded a number of professions of skepticism, but what weight and interpretation should be put on them is not easy to say. Even though Little Man, Coming Daylight's husband, "did not," she said, "believe in Indian doctors," at one time at least, he submitted to treatmenet by Goes Back and became convinced she had extracted the cause of his illness. Another man present at Little Man's cure said, "I too never believed things," but he likewise was convinced when he saw the rag that Goes Back extracted.

In general, our evidence on doctoring points definitely toward the conclusion that the powers of medicine men, both for curing and for causing illness, were all but universally believed in. Such skepticism as prevailed was confirmed to certain individual skeptics and even in these cases or in most of them as regards not doctors in general but only certain individual doctors, and not all powers and procedures of the doctor but only certain ones. Furthermore profession of skepticism need not in all cases of course have been indicative of actual skepticism, and even actual skepticism would give place to belief when the skeptic witnessed cures, or profession of skepticism to profession of belief when the doctor was present. Some of such skepticism as prevailed may well have been a compensation reaction to the size and kind of payment demanded by some doctors. To this matter of payment we now turn.

Payment for Services

756 465 Some payment or gift was commonly, perhaps always, made to even the non-professional individual who gathered a medicine for you or gave one to you or who treated you, unless he or she was your very close relative. One who wanted "fish medicine" from a person who had brought it back from Minnesota would buy it from him. Singer remarked: "My mother always taught me: 'If

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you are not feeling well and someone brings you medicine, say, medicine to clear you out after childbirth, and you have nothing else to give the person, just give a dish of food.'" Coming Daylight, who was not a professional doctor, was called about 1928 to attend a childbirth and, when ready to leave after looking after the mother in every way, was given a big sack of flour, a small sack of sugar, and five dollars in cash. Mary Ereaux, in speaking of the two roots given to Coming Daylight by the latter's grandmother to hasten childbirth and to bring the mother's milk quickly, remarked: "They say that if it [either of these roots] is given to an outsider [not a close relative of Coming Daylight], the recipient must pay, else it wouldn't be any good." "Last winter [1939-40]," Mary Ereaux said on another occasion, "I had a cold. An old lady picked some roots for me and I gave her potatoes and eggs in place of this medicine. They believe such medicine does not work if you don't pay for it, no matter how easy it is to gather the particular medicine."

A payment or fee was always expected by the professional doctor for his or her services, unless again the patient was a close relative. The doctor had commonly "paid" well in hardship or goods to acquire his power; he expected to be paid well in turn. And even though he had acquired ownership of it, not the hard way by quest or purchase, but by spontaneous offer from some being or by free gift from some relative, he still "paid" in shortened life and in restrictions on freedom. Doctors did not make their whole living from their practice but the fees received by them, especially by "great" doctors, were substantial additions to income and wealth. This economic goal loomed large in the consciousness of the people and of the professional doctor. When, for instance, Bad Bad Bull's sister refused his offer to her of power to cure stomach sickness, people said to her: "You should have accepted this power and so have gotten a lot of things for curing this disease." Doctoring was an avenue to wealth and to the ease and prestige that came with wealth, but in general was not practiced by the young. It was, however, a form of "old age insurance."

Sometimes professional doctors named their fee before accepting a case. "Give me this or that, and I'll doctor you." At other times

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●756 the person cured, or his relatives, gave what they thought equitable. "Sometimes," Mary Ereaux said, "doctors set a price and other times they say 'just what you want to pay.' Ragged Robe, who doctored me, never set a price, because I used to keep him and his wife during the winter. I would just give them, over and above that, whatever I could afford at the time." Coming Daylight, when asked if the doctors set a price, thought this funny. "People," she said, "pay the doctor they call what they think his services are worth,"—a remark which might suggest that the amount of payment was commonly left to the patient or his relatives. When Singer's husband was cured by Good Singer, the latter was given "the best of what they had."

Usually the objects to be given in payment were gathered together and put in view before treatment began and were turned over to the doctor just before or just after treatment, whether cure was actually effected or not. What Al Chandler reported of his adopted father,—"if Little Man couldn't cure you, he wouldn't want anything; he would wait before he took what a person paid, because he wanted to see if the patient was really well,"—was seemingly an exceptional practice.

The doctor would commonly share some of his fee with the men and women designated by him to be present at the rite and to help him.

Sometimes the payment made to a doctor was a modest one. Coming Daylight "every now and then took grub and wood to the medicine woman" who brought her daughter back to health. Ordinarily, however, at least in cases of serious or critical illness, the fee paid was a substantial one, such as horses, blankets, clothing, and large amounts of food.[18]

In Coming Daylight's earlier days, before money came in, clothing or a horse would be given to the main doctor who assisted at childbirth, and additional fees to helpers. One medicine man was paid a whole outfit of clothing, down to the moccasins, and his wife a half buffalo (or elk), for curing Coming Daylight when her "milk was bad" and she feared she would lose her infant daughter. Goes Back received a "nice horse" for curing Coming Daylight's hus-

[18] Cf. Flannery, 1953, p. 87.

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band, Little Man; Drops In The Fire, a horse for curing Crow Bull; Stiffarm, lots of things, horses and so forth, including "one lovely mare," for treating—unsuccessfully—Little Man. Good Singer received "horses, blankets and such things," for curing Singer herself. Bull Lodge was given "the best horses" for treating Al Chandler's uncle. All the foregoing payments were for cases of serious illness. Mae Main stated that a person who wanted to procure a certain contraceptive root would have to "pay a big price for this, sometimes two or three horses."

Sometimes, how commonly or rarely it is hard to say, a medicine man would stipulate sex relations as his payment or part thereof. Cora Chandler had heard "that some medicine men take women afterwards as part of the payment for curing." "This," she explained, "is why Coming Daylight was afraid of that medicine man when he was stark naked," having disrobed before starting to treat her (supra, p. 338). "Occasionally," Thomas Main had heard, "in very serious circumstances a man, to save the life of a brother or of someone dear to him, would pay the fee of giving his wife [allowing the doctor sex relations with her]."

The relative decline of native doctoring is due in part to the influence of the missionaries and of the civil authorities, in part no doubt to educational and other accultural factors. All the Gros Ventres today are members of the Catholic Church. "Joe Assiniboine," said Coming Daylight, "a good medicine man, still living [in 1940: he died in 1942 or 1943], never joined the Church; joining would take his power away from him." Stiffarm, one of the last of the great doctors, who died in 1932, on becoming a Catholic and later a catechist, is reported by one informant to have renounced his doctoring powers. One reason Coming Daylight gave for not accepting doctoring power herself was, "my children were all Catholics and I joined the Church and I will be a good Catholic till I die." Little Man, Al Chandler's adopted father, wanted to pass on some of his curing power to him, but Al did not want it, because, he said, he was afraid he would "poison someone" but also on account of the Catholic Church. . . . "The Catholics didn't want you to do such things."

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INDIVIDUAL VARIATION IN CULTURE

Regina Flannery

It is generally accepted that what Benedict called the Dionysian configuration of Plains culture represents a dominant, if not the only trend. By definition a configuration is a generalization lying behind and explaining a number of cultural patterns. A pattern itself is of course an abstraction from the behavior of a number of individuals. The behavior of any one person may vary at different times in respect to a particular type of situation, but it is unlikely that the individual will show the whole range of possible behavior within a pattern; it will cover only a portion thereof. As Linton pointed out, the difference between the individual mode within this segment, and the mode of the behaviors on which the pattern is based, reflects the compromise which every individual has to make between the culture patterns of his society and his own inclinations. It would seem further, then, that if the modes of an individual's behavior-ranges show a consistent displacement with respect to a large series of patterns, it is safe to assume that the direction of this displacement reflects some quality of the individual.[1] The question we wish to raise is this: If the aspect of personality thus revealed runs counter to a dominant trend of his culture, is the individual a misfit in that society?

In attempting an answer, let us examine some individual variations within those patterns of Plains culture in which expression of emotional excess, and dangerous experience were expected of women in one Plains society, that of the Gros Ventres of Montana. We shall outline in some detail the behavior of one Gros Ventre woman in respect of these selected patterns—from which the Dionysian configuration was abstracted—and contrast her behavior with that of others of approximately the same age. All had participated as adults in the old way of life before the disappearance of the buffalo in 1887.

In Gros Ventre culture, as in all the Plains, there was high valuation placed on direct contact of the individual with the supernatural through dreams and visions. Men could actively seek such contact by employing dangerous means, and did so in order to obtain many kinds of power. While women did not go on the actual power quest, they might acquire medicine powers and less frequently, perhaps, powers of clairvoyance. Medicine powers were considered dangerous in that, it was believed, by accepting them a limitation was put upon the life span of the practitioner. But the rewards in terms of prestige for successful performance and of payment for services were high for women as well as for men. Not every individual man was successful in his quest, nor of course was every woman vouchsafed the kinds of dreams which were requisite. Coming Daylight, the woman whose behavior we are examining in particular, was what her contemporaries considered fortunate indeed in having been offered curing powers of several kinds. Nevertheless she rejected the possibility each time, in spite of the fact that she had a living example in the person of her father's sister of what it could mean in prestige to a woman who accepted. As the reasons for her refusal seem significant I shall describe her experience in her own words.

[p.87]

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"My experience was by dreaming. One time before I was married—I must have been about eight years old—I was sleeping in a big lodge and a 'person' came and wakened me. He had a bag of medicines on his back. He came to me on four successive nights and laid out these medicines and told me what each was for. On the third of these nights there was a man lying there—he was just skin and bones. The 'person' who had awakened me told me: 'You could take all these medicines and you could cure people like that one lying there' [i.e., a person in the last extremity]. In my dream I would do everything he told me, manipulate my hands to draw out the sickness, and do everything. But I didn't want that power and would tell him so. Each morning too I would relate to my grandmother exactly what had happened in the night but she would try to hush me up, telling me: 'Don't say anything; don't tell anyone. You will be a great medicine woman.' But I didn't want that power. I didn't like it because when medicine people suck on the weak part of the sick person they have to swallow what they extract. I had decided I would rather be quiet and not do anything like that, or sacrifice my flesh, or things of that kind. Perhaps if it had come later I might have taken that power and become great."

Nevertheless when later in life she had other dreams indicating supernatural power, she likewise refused. She explained in regard to one of these experiences, for instance: "The one who awakened me this time had told me to face the rising sun and was showing me how to make a smudge from the moss that grows close on logs; but I told him. 'No. I would rather not have it.' Those who have power die too soon."

Incidentally, still in connection with curing, bleeding was an operation which was performed purely as a natural remedy for a person who felt dizzy or sluggish. Anyone could do it—no supernatural validation was needed. Other women described quite casually how it was done and discussed the various times they had actually performed the operation. Coming Daylight, however, insisted that while there was really nothing to such an operation, she could never bring herself to perform it, nor would she allow anyone else to bleed her; she could not stand the sight of blood.

The aversion to the sight of blood and to self-mutilation was evidently deep-seated and showed itself in a marked manner early in her life. On one occasion a close relative was very ill. In such a situation it was expected that every member of the family would rally around and do whatever he could toward the recovery. Among the things that fell within the scope of activity for female relatives was that of vowing to sacrifice something valuable, including perhaps the blood from one's arm or a finger-joint, if the person recovered. At this particular time, Coming Daylight was a young child, and her grandmother decided that it would be appropriate for the little girl to offer that her finger-tip be removed if the relative regained his health. When it was suggested to her, Coming Daylight refused, even though her grandmother took after her with a stick. She actually ran away and wandered alone, until two nights later the relative died and an uncle finally found her.

On another occasion in her early youth, too, she defied a convention connected with kinship by refusing to join in mourning for an uncle who had been killed in revenge for having instigated the murder of his brother's wife. When her grandmother upbraided Coming Daylight for not expressing grief in the traditional manner, the latter defied her by saying: "I am not going to cry for that man. I don't know why you are crying for him. I have worked for that woman and she has fed me, and has even given me meat to bring home to you. I heard